Liberty

NOT THE DAUGHTER BUT THE MOTHER OF ORDER — PROUDHON

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"For always in thine eyes, O Liberty!
Shines that high light whereby the world is saved;
And though thou slay us, we will trust in thee."

JOHN HAY.

On Picket Duty.

The "Standard" quotes approvingly the Ocala "Banner's" remark that "the way to defeat Henry George is to answer his arguments." Nevertheless, it is a policy which the "Standard's" editor studiously avoids in dealing with his own opponents.

Let no reader skip the exquisite piece of satire, by a Socialist upon a type of Socialist unfortunately too frequently met, which is reprinted in another column from the London "Today." No one familiar with the keen and witty style of G. Bernard Shaw will be deceived as to the paternity of the article by its anagrammatic signature.

The New Haven "Workmen's Advocate" has just discovered "Professor Ely's Fall." If it had had Liberty's sharp eyes, it would have seen that he never rose, except in the estimation of the easily cajoled and the unthinking. As long ago as 1883, when Ely's first book appeared, Liberty pronounced and *proved* the author a charlatan. Such reputation as he enjoys he owes largely to the stupidity of short-sighted Socialists who, caught by his hypocritical professions of impartiality, put him forward almost as an apostle and who are just beginning to realize that they have been victimized.

Liberty recently noted the revolution in the office of the Detroit "Advance and Labor Leaf" by which the editorial management of that paper passed from the hands of John R. Burton into those of Captain J. M. McGregor, under whose administration it has been an organ of the Henry George doctrine. It now takes pleasure in noting a second revolution, by which Captain McGregor confines himself to the business management and is succeeded in the editorial chair by Comrade Joe Labadie. There is a stock company, to be sure, to keep Labadie in order, but, rampant Anarchist that he is, he has a will of his own, and where there's a will there's a way. With his Anarchistic views, independent mind, and power of vigorous expression, he is sure to make the editorial columns of the "Advance" a treasury of wit, wisdom, and virility.

In the Boston "Investigator" recently an article appeared over the familiar initials, "E. B. F.," rebuking the editor for one of his characteristically equivocal comments upon the Comstock law, and reminding him that laws are made, not by the people, but by political bosses who so manipulate political machinery that they induce the people to go through the farce of voting them into office, after which they legislate at the bidding of those who offer the most "boodle." The fossil who sits in the editorial chair made a solemn effort to refute this position, and then unwittingly endorsed it himself in the same issue by printing without comment, upon the editorial page in editorial type, a long extract from Herbert Spencer concluding as follows: "Here [in America] it seems to me that 'the sovereign people' is fast becoming a puppet which moves and speaks as wire-pullers determine."

Henry George, in his enthusiasm for taxation, goes so far as to defend the right of the taxing power to "at any time impose taxes so high as to destroy the value of any kind of property," and rests his assertion on the statement of Chief Justice Marshall that "the power to tax involves the power to destroy." Which remark is as true as it is brutal, but it takes for granted the power to tax. Its author is the same John Marshall of whom Lysander Spooner said that he "would have been a great jurist, if the two fundamental propositions on which all his legal, political, and constitutional ideas were based had been true," these propositions being, "first, that government has all power, and, secondly, that the people have no rights," and the rightfulness of taxation is one of those false assumptions in the use of which Mr. Spooner declared him an adept. As far as liberty-loving people are concerned, Mr. George might as well try to justify his scheme by citing the authority of the Czar of Russia as by citing that of John Marshall.

I would never have believed that the local column of a newspaper published in a village of no special interest to me could have been made to command my attention, but somehow or other Editor Pinney of the Winsted "Press," with whom I recently conducted a lively tilt, contrives to dish up the daily doings of his little borough in a style which I cannot resist. Thus it happens that my eye lit, in a recent number, upon a paragraph reading as follows: "We call attention to the warning of the special town meeting for Monday P. M. next. It will bear particular scrutiny. We are not prophets; but if the construction put upon this document by people skilled in the interpretation of legal points is correct, we predict that the meeting of Monday, whatever its issue, will be followed by another meeting, in order to make things right all around." 'Tis ever thus, my friend, in affairs of State,—in the running of that clumsy mechanism which, though you buffet and maul it so vigorously, you think indispensable to human welfare as soon as an Anarchist similarly smites it.

"John Swinton's Paper" is publishing a series of articles entitled: "Wage-Slavery as Viewed by a Wage-Slave." They are written by A. S. Leitch of St. Louis. In the seventh of the series he says: "The 'free money' theory here becomes ridiculous. If every shoemaker could run a little cobbler's shop independent of every other fellow-workman, and other trades the same, then the 'every-one-his-own-banker' theory might be carried out; if two or ten thousand are to combine in a co-operative manufactory, using all the modern labor-saving machines applicable to the trade, then the medium of exchange, money, must be based upon the same coöperative principle." This shot flies very wide the mark. I have yet to meet the advocate of free money who insists that every one shall be his own banker or who objects to the issue of money by coöperation. If Mr. Leitch has ever met such a person and will tell me how to reach him, I, as an advocate of free money, will endeavor to show him the error of his ways. What the friends of free money are fighting for is the right both of individuals and of coöperators to issue money when and as they choose, and what they are fighting against is the laws which in any way make it impossible for either individuals or coöperators to exercise this right. This, and nothing else, is the free money theory, and he who says that it "here becomes ridiculous" becomes ridiculous himself.

Henry George was recently reminded in these columns that his own logic would compel him to lay a tax, not only on land values, but on all values growing out of increase of population, and newspaper properties were cited in illustration. A correspondent of the "Standard" has made the same criticism, instancing, instead of a newspaper, "Crusoe's boat which rose in value when a ship appeared on the horizon." To this correspondent Mr. George makes answer that, while Crusoe's boat might have acquired a value when other people came, "because value is a factor of trading, and, when there is no one to trade with, there can be no value," yet "it by no means follows that growth of population increases the value of labor products, for a population of fifty will give as much value to a desirable product as a population of a million." I am ready to admit this of any article which can be readily produced by any and all who choose to produce it. But, as Mr. George says, it is not true of land, and it is as emphatically not true of every article in great demand which can be produced, in approximately equal quality and with approximately equal expense, by only one or a few persons. There are many such articles, and one of them is a popular newspaper. Such articles are of small value where there are few people and of immense value where there are many. This extra value is unearned increment, and ought to be taxed out of the individual's hands into those of the community if any unearned increment ought to be. Come, Mr. George, be honest! Let us see whither your doctrine will lead us.

Cart and horse are all one to Henry George. He puts either first to suit his fancy or the turn his questioner may take, and, no matter which he places in the lead, he "gets there all the same"—on paper. When he is asked how taxation of land values will abolish poverty, he answers that the rush of wage-laborers to the land will reduce the supply of labor and send wages up. Then, when somebody else asks him how wage-laborers will be able to rush to the land without money to take them there and capital to work the land afterwards, he answers that wages will then be so high that the laborer will soon be able to save up money enough to start with. Sometimes, indeed, as if dimly perceiving the presence of some inconsistency lurking between these two propositions, he volunteers an additional suggestion that, after the lapse of a generation, he will be a phenomenally unfortunate young man who shall have no relatives or friends to help him start upon the land. But we are left as much in the dark as ever about the method by which these relatives or friends, during the generation which must elapse before the young men get to the land, are to save up anything to give these young men a start, in the absence of that increase of wages which can only come as a consequence of the young men having gone to the land. Mr. George, however, has still another resource in reserve, and, when forced to it, he trots it out,—namely, that, there being all grades between the rich and the very poor, those having enough to start themselves upon the land would do so, and the abjectly poor, no longer having them for competitors, would get higher wages. Of course one might ask why these diminutive capitalists, who even now can go to the land if they choose, since there is plenty to be had for but little more than the asking, refrain nevertheless from at once relieving an over-stocked labor market; but it would do no good. You see, you can't stump Henry George. He always comes up blandly smiling. He knows he has a ready tongue and a facile pen, and on these he relies to carry him safely through the mazes of unreason.

THE SCIENCE OF SOCIETY.

By STEPHEN PEARL ANDREWS.

PART SECOND.

COST THE LIMIT OF PRICE:

A Scientific Measure of Honest Trade as One of the Fundamental Principles in the Solution of the Social Problem.

Continued from No. 103.

CHAPTER IV.

VALUE DISTINGUISHED FROM COST.

129. The second grand result from the principle of Equity—Cost the Limit of Price—is that *the value of labor or of a commodity has nothing whatever to do legitimately with fixing the* PRICE *of the labor or commodity.* This proposition would be deduced partially from what has been already shown; it requires, however, to be more explicitly stated and more conclusively demonstrated. It is, as well as the result considered in the last chapter in relation to natural skill or talent, quite new, and therefore surprising.

130. There is certainly nothing more reasonable, according to existing ideas, than that "*a thing ought to bring what it is worth.*" No proposition could be more seemingly innocent upon the face of it than that. (19.) There is no statement upon any subject upon which mankind would more generally concur, and yet that statement covers a fallacy which lies at the basis of the prevalent system of *exploitation* or civilized cannibalism. It is precisely at this point that the whole world has committed its most fatal blunder. It will be the purpose of this chapter to expose that error so obviously that it can no longer lurk in obscurity even in the least enlightened mind. To that end I beg the especial attention of the reader to the technical distinction between *Value and Cost,*—a point of great importance to this whole discussion.

131. "What a thing is worth" is another expression for the Value of a commodity or labor. The *Value* of a commodity or labor is *the degree of benefit which it confers upon the person who receives it, or to whose use it is applied.* The *Cost* of it is, on the other hand, as already explained, *the degree of burden which the production of the commodity or the performance of the labor imposed upon the person who produced or performed it.* They are therefore by no means the same. No two things can possibly be more distinct. The burden or cost may be very great and the benefit or value very little, or *vice versa.* In the case of an exchange or transfer of an article from one person to another, the Cost relates to the party who makes the transfer, the burden of the production falling on him, and the Value to the party to whom the transfer is made, the article going to his benefit. It is the same if the object exchanged is labor directly. It follows, therefore, that to say that "a thing should bring what it is worth," which is the same as to say that *its price should be measured by its value,* is quite the opposite of affirming that it should bring *as much as it cost the producer to produce it.* Hence, both rules cannot be true, for they conflict with and destroy each other. But we have already seen that it is exactly equitable that Cost be adopted as the universal limit of price,—in other words, that as much burden shall be assumed by each party to the exchange as is imposed upon the opposite party. Consequently the accepted axiom of trade that "a thing should bring what it is worth" proves, when tested by simply balancing the scales of Equity, to be not only erroneous, but, so to speak, the antipodes of the true principle. Such is the result when we recur to fundamental investigation. It will be rendered equally obvious in the sequel, by a comparison of the consequences of the two principles in operation, that *Cost* is the true and *Value* the false measure of price.

132. But although Value is not the legitimate limit of Price nor even an element in the price, it is, nevertheless, an element in the bargain. *It is the Value of the thing to be acquired which determines the purchaser to purchase.* It belongs to the man who labors or produces an article, estimating for himself, as we have seen, the amount of burden he has assumed, to fix the price, measured by that burden or Cost. He alone knows it, and he alone, therefore, can determine it. It belongs, on the other hand, to the purchaser to estimate for himself the Value of the labor or commodity to him. He alone can do so in fact, for he alone knows the nature of his own wants. By the settlement of the first point—the Cost to the producer—the Price becomes a fixed sum. If the Value then exceeds that sum in the estimation of the other party, he will purchase; otherwise, not. Hence the Value, though not an element in the Price, is an element in the bargain. The Price is a consideration wholly for the vender, and the Value a consideration wholly for the purchaser.

133. As this is also a point of great importance, let us state it again. If you require and desire to obtain one hour or one year of my services, or the results of those services in commodities, which is the same thing, it is a matter which does not concern me,—it is impertinence on my part to concern myself with the question of the degree of benefit you will derive from such services. That is purely a question for your own consideration, and determines you whether you can afford to give me the equitable price of my labor,—whether the *value* to you equals the *cost* to me,—that is, *it determines the demand.* Your estimate of that value or benefit to you may be based on considerations obvious to others, or upon a mere whim or caprice to the gratification of which others would attach no importance. But it belongs to the Sovereignty of the Individual to gratify even one's whims or caprices without hindrance or interference from others, at his own cost, which is, when the services of others are required to that end, by paying to them the cost *to them* of such services.

134. On the other hand, it is equally an impertinence for you, in the case supposed, to attempt to settle for me the degree of attraction or repugnance which there is *to me* in the performance of the services which you require. No one else but myself can possibly know that. No one else can therefore fix a just price upon my labor. Hence it follows that both *value* and *cost* enter into a bargain, even when legitimately made. But *value* goes solely to determine the *demand,* and is solely cognizable by the *purchaser* or *consumer,*—by *him who receives,* while *cost* (or *burden*) goes to determine the *price,* and is solely cognizable by the *seller* or *producer,*—*by him who renders.* By this means the cost of each one's acts is made to fall on himself, which is the essential condition to the rightful exercise of the Sovereignty of the Individual. If you over-estimate the value to you of my services, you endure the cost or disagreeable consequences of your mistake or want of judgment. If I, on the other hand, under-estimate the cost or endurance of the performance to me, the cost of that error falls on me, submitting each of us to the government of consequences, the only legitimate corrective. If, again, I over-estimate the cost to me and ask a price greater than your estimate of the value to you, there is no bargain, and I have lost the opportunity of earning a price measured by the real cost of the performance, so that the cost of my mistake falls again on me; while—the market being open, and a thorough adjustment of supply to demand being established—others will make a juster estimate, whose services you will procure, and you will suffer no inconvenience. Competition will regulate any disposition on my part to overcharge. (160.)

135. All this is reversed in our existing commerce. The vender adjusts his price to what he supposes to be its value to the purchaser,—that is, to the degree of want in which the purchaser is found,—never to what the commodity cost himself; thus interfering with what cannot concern him, except as a means of taking an undue advantage. The purchaser, on the other hand, offers a price based upon his knowledge or surmise of what the degree of want of the vender may force him to consent to take. Hence the cannibalism of trade.

136. But it is objected that in the case supposed above, while nominally adjusting my price to the degree of repugnance to myself, I may in fact take into account the degree of your want, and charge you as much as I think you will endure. This objection, otherwise stated, is simply this,—that the Individual, in the exercise of his sovereign freedom, may abandon the Cost Principle, or, in other words, the true principle, and return to the value, or false principle. That is, in other words, again, simply to affirm that there is nothing in the true principle to force the Individual to comply with it, to the extent of depriving him of his freedom to do otherwise. This is granted. Any such compulsion would infringe upon the principle of the Sovereignty of the Individual, which is, if possible, still more important than the *Cost Principle* itself. Once for all let it be distinctly understood that the principles of Equitable Commerce do not serve directly and mainly to coerce men into true or harmonic relations when destitute of the desire for such relations. Their first office is, on the other hand, to inform those who do desire such relations, how they may be attained. If it is assumed that there are no such persons, then, certainly, the supply of true principles, of any sort, is a *supply* without a *demand,*—but not otherwise.

137. The secondary or indirect effect of true commercial principles in operation will be, however, correctional, and in one sense coercive, but coercive in a sense entirely compatible with freedom. It will be to throw the consequences of each one's deviation from right practice upon himself, leaving him free to exercise his own Sovereignty, but free to do so, as he ought, at his own cost, while they will surround him with a public sentiment in favor of honesty more potent than laws, at the same time that they will remove the temptations now existing to infringe the rights of others. It will be seen at another point that competition, which is now the tyrant that forces men to be dishonest, will, under these principles, operate with equal power to induce them to be honest. (160, 206.)

138. An illustration of the entire disconnection between Price and the Value to the purchaser is found in the one-price store, in existing commerce. Upon this plan of trade the prices are fixed by the merchant-vender of the goods, and each article is labeled at a fixed and invariable amount. The customer has nothing whatever to do with fixing those prices. On the other hand, it is the purchaser alone who determines whether the Value of an article to him is sufficient to induce him to purchase at the price fixed. In these particulars the operation is the same as that of *Equitable Commerce.* It differs, however, in the essential particular that the merchant, in fixing his prices, is governed by no scientific principle. The prices are not adjusted by any equitable standard. They rest upon an uncertain and fluctuating basis, partly Cost, partly the necessities or cupidity of the vender, and partly the supply and demand or the supposed Value to the purchaser. Value is thus made actually an element of the price in a general way, though not in the particular case. The vender refuses to vary his price according to the particular Value to the particular purchaser, but he has previously taken into the account the general value to purchasers at large. The case is only good, therefore, to illustrate the single point for which it was adduced,—namely, the separability of Price and Value to the purchaser,—the fact that they are not necessarily commingled with each other. The ticket at the theatre, the public lecture, the railroad, etc., furnishes another illustration of the same fact. The price is invariable, and the purchaser is left to determine for himself whether the *Value* equals the *Cost;* if so in his opinion, there is a bargain, otherwise not.

139. As respects the propriety of measuring Price by Value, in the first place, *it is essentially impossible to measure Value* EXACTLY, *or, in other words, to ascertain the precise* WORTH *of labor or commodities.*

Cost is a thing which looks to the past, and is therefore certain. *Value* is a thing which looks to the future, and is therefore contingent and uncertain. A bushel of potatoes lies before us. It is possible to estimate with accuracy how much human labor it ordinarily takes to produce that amount of that article, and how disagreeable the labor is as compared with other kinds, and then we have the standard cost of the article; but who will undertake to say what the value of that bushel of potatoes is as it stands in the market? Value, remember, is the degree of benefit it will confer upon the person or persons who are to consume it. That value, it is obvious, will vary with every one of the fifty thousand persons in the city who may chance to purchase it, and will vary with the extremes of saving twenty human lives (as it may do on shipboard, for example) and nothing at all, for the potatoes may stock a larder already overstocked and be permitted to decay, appropriated to no beneficial purpose whatsoever. As every one of the twenty starving persons would gladly have given at least ten thousand dollars for his share of the potatoes rather than not have had them, the value of the bushel of potatoes is any thing between cipher and two hundred thousand dollars.

Take a more complicated case. It is possible to calculate how much it costs, down to the fraction of a cent (or, more properly, of an hour's labor), to convey a man from New York to Albany on a first-class steamboat,—the Isaac Newton or the Hendrick Hudson for example,—taking into account the cost of construction, the cost of running, the number of persons regularly traveling among whom the expense is to be divided, etc. But who will undertake to calculate the different values of a trip up the Hudson to the eight hundred or a thousand persons who gather at the wharf at the departure of one of those magnificent boats? One is neglecting his business at home and going on a speculation in which he will lose a thousand dollars. How much is the trip worth to him? There is a bridegroom and bride going off to enjoy the honeymoon. How much in hard money is the trip worth to them? There stands a poor invalid who hopes to recover a little health by the cool breezes on the quiet river. There is a young man fresh from school, just starting out to see the world and gratify his curiosity. There is a sharper who will cheat somebody out of a few hundreds before he gets back, and so on. What is the *Value* to each of these of a trip up the Hudson? Value is the benefit to be done to each. How big is a piece of chalk? How much is considerable? How far is a good ways? And yet all the political economy, all the calculations of finance, all the banking, all the trading and commercial transactions in the world, are based upon the idea of the measurement and comparison of *Values.* Even Mr. Kellogg, Mr. Gray, and others who write as financial reformers, and whose labors in demonstrating the oppressive operation of interest or rent on money are invaluable, fall into the same error. Mr. Kellogg has a chapter "On the Power of Money to Measure Value," and asserts without question that this is one of the legitimate functions of a circulating medium.

140. It is possible, it is true, for parties to form an *estimate* of relative values,

based upon their present knowledge of all future contingencies, and thus to prefer one thing to another in a certain ratio; but the very next event which occurs may show the calculation of chances to have been entirely fallacious, and the real value of the object, on the one hand or the other, to be entirely different from what was anticipated. Hence, every exchange, based upon the comparison of values, is a speculation upon the probabilities of the future, and not a scientific measurement of that which already exists. All trade under the existing system is therefore speculation, in kind, the uncertainty differing in degree, and all speculation is gambling, or the staking of risks against risks. The instrument of measurement is equally defective, as has been already shown in discussing the nature of money. (77, 125.)

141. In the next place, if it *were* possible to measure Values precisely, *the exchange of commodities according to Value would still be a system of mutual conquest and oppression*,—not a beneficent reciprocation of equivalents. This will appear by one or two simple illustrations.

142. I.—Suppose I am a wheelwright in a small village, and the only one of my trade. You are traveling with certain valuables in your carriage, which breaks down opposite my shop. It will take an hour of my time to mend the carriage. You can get no other means of conveyance, and the loss to you, if you fail to arrive at the neighboring town in season for the sailing of a certain vessel, will be five hundred dollars, which fact you mention to me, in good faith, in order to quicken my exertions. I give one hour of my work and mend the carriage. What am I in equity entitled to charge—what should be the *limit of price* upon my labor?

Let us apply the different measures and see how they will operate. If Value is the limit of price, then the price of the hour's labor should be five hundred dollars. That is the equivalent of the value of the labor to you. If cost is the limit of price, then you should pay me a commodity, or commodities, or a representative in currency which will procure me commodities, having in them one hour's labor equally as hard as the mending of the carriage, without the slightest reference to the degree of benefit which that labor has bestowed on you: or, putting the illustration in money, thus; assuming the twenty-five cents to be an equivalent for an hour's labor of an artisan in that particular trade, then according to the *Cost Principle* I should be justified in asking only twenty-five cents, but according to the *Value Principle* I should be justified in asking five hundred dollars.

143. The *Value Principle*, in some form of expression, is, as I have said, the only *recognized* principle of trade throughout the world. "A thing is worth what it will bring in the market." Still if I were to charge you five hundred dollars, or a fourth part of that sum, and, taking advantage of your necessities, force you to pay it, everybody would denounce me, the poor wheelwright, as an extortioner and a scoundrel. Why? Simply because this is an *unusual* application of the principle. Wheelwrights seldom have a chance to make such a "speculation," and therefore it is not according to the "established usages of trade." Hence its manifest injustice shocks, in such a case, the common sense of right. Meanwhile you, a wealthy merchant, are daily rolling up an enormous fortune by doing business upon the same principle which you condemn in the wheelwright, and nobody finds fault. At every scarcity in the market you immediately raise the price of every article you hold. It is your *business* to take advantage of the necessities of those with whom you deal, by selling to them according to the *Value* to them, and not according to the *Cost* to you. You go further. You, by every means in your power, create those necessities by buying up particular articles and holding them out of the market until the demand becomes pressing, by circulating false reports of short crops, and by other similar tricks known to the trade. This is the same in principle as if the wheelwright had first dug the rut in which your carriage upset and then charged you the five hundred dollars.

To be continued.

IRELAND!

By GEORGES SAUTON.

Translated from the French for Liberty by Sarah E. Holmes.

Continued from No. 103.

But the Duchess, reading the brain of her lover like an open book, made formal opposition to this plan of rescue; and, as Richard, sceptical regarding the moral means to which she might resort if he should think of disregarding her command, turned his eyes questioningly towards the dagger which she continued to handle in her agitation with feverish movements, she threw the terrible blade into a corner, and with a smile, expressive first of pity and then of a passion which also disarmed her and brightened her face with an ardent and caressing tenderness, she said, as if no quarrel had taken place:

"Ah! my Richard, how wrongly you judge me! Kill you that you may not run after this Marian! Kill you,—that is, close forever those dear eyes from which emanated the vivifying light which first roused love within me, and seal with ice that mouth from which infinite happiness flowed so long in my veins, as from a marvellous fount! Exhausted for me since the birth of the kisses which you give to another in your barren ecstasies, I am dying, my heart withered, my soul consumed with a devouring fire which kindles unspeakable wrath within it. Kill you! but I wish, on the contrary, your re-opened lips to distil for me anew their wild intoxicants, while they shall drink from mine and from my fragrant body the joys for which you constantly thirsted but so recently."

"Say the philter which destroys reason, honor, and conscience," said he, in the beginning of an excitement which was the precursor of his defeat.

By recalling these sensual memories, which she enumerated with agitated modulations of her warm, golden voice, in which mingled languishing strains of violincellos and the lulling music of an orchestra dying away in the distance, she regained him. In the orbs of the changing eyes of this magician of love all mad desires glittered by turns, through them passed the delicious languors weary of gratification, and the allurement of feverish renewals of voluptuous delight half revealed itself behind the trellis of her fawn-colored lashes, completely disorganizing the weakening resistance of Bradwell.

And she asked herself, laughing inwardly at this declining transformation of the hostile and faithless will of her pliable lover, why she had allowed herself to be governed by a stupid, vixenish passion, which disfigured her without any doubt, lowering her to the level of the commonplace creatures of ordinary households, of the mistresses of the market-place, of the Ariadnes of dens of ill-repute.

The trivial, filthy taunt, in her mouth fashioned for the wayward and delicately delusive phrases which ensnare, this frenzy demeaning her lascivious being so irresistibly fascinating when she wished it, what nonsense, what madness to set up anger against anger, when, by caressing ways, by "the old times" of carnal emotions, and by exciting words skilfully recalled, she could succeed so completely in melting the harshness of rage at its paroxysm, however justifiable, and of spite, however comprehensible!

In truth, Richard's attitude had disturbed her self-possession, inducing in her a momentary irritation so prompt and sharp that she bade farewell to reflection, to calculation.

See! For twenty-four hours she had forced herself to avoid him in the apartments of the castle, through which he passed alone; he was recovering from his discomfiture in regard to Marian, his sadness in such states of mind plunged him into a brown study, and she thought it expedient not to meet him; but after this lapse of time, could she calmly allow him to remain in his philosophico-amorous meditations eternally on account of the same object?

And when, obeying an irresistible and unavoidable force, she approached the subject regarding which she could have wished not to appear disturbed, partly from prudence, partly from vanity, Richard avowed squarely that which propriety, respect, gallantry forbade him to confess; she urged him to deny the scandal learned by her from divers sources, and he persisted in building it up; she exhorted him to a pious lie which would calm her, and he declined to satisfy her. Zounds! any one, equally irascible and even less gullible than she, would have overstepped the boundaries, would have descended to the same shameful triviality, and the same low, passionate, bitter, virulent violence.

But she would be more careful in the future. Moreover, she needed only to gain time, till the death of Newington which now would not be long in coming. Afterwards, captivated by caresses, enchained by the bonds of an effective moral complicity,—the Duchess flattered herself,—Sir Richard, although he might still long for his cursed Marian, would be forced to entirely renounce her, if tragic events, in which he possibly would aid, did not first oblige him to give her up for lost.

And, smiling at this near future of peaceful, orderly adulteries, Lady Ellen, more coquettish, and made more alluring by her purpose of seduction, resumed her irresistible artifices, the recitals which sent feverishly erotic thrills through Richard's body, stirring the blood in his arteries till it mounted to his head like intoxicating wine, and quickening his amorous sensibilities. In his exultation his eyes discerned through her glittering spangles the radiant nudity of Ellen's body, and his dilating nostrils breathed the fresh and intoxicating perfume of the exquisite flesh of the young woman whom he now desired with all his might.

Nevertheless, he still dreamed of the lonely one, of her who, in this thick night, in the moaning north wind, in the cold in which the black and leafless trees shivered, was perhaps drawing her last breath, overwhelmed by suffering, by horror of the darkness, of the solitude, of the frightful unknown concealed in the gloom, by the natural fear of death, at her age so hideous and inconsolable.

He dreamed especially of her whom some soldier, some wretch, some robber was violating perhaps at this very hour, in the night, like a coward, with no one even to help her, with no possibility of her cries, lost in the gusts of wind, reaching the ears of any one whom she might call to her rescue.

Still possessed by his mania!

But Lady Ellen would not take offence at it, would not become excited; these last clouds would soon vanish, chased away by the light puff of her breath with which she bathed Richard's fevered brow, sighing, simulating a sorrow which swelled her breast, and all at once, in a crushing need of consolation, leaning on her lover's shoulder.

He did not embrace her yet, although burning with desire to do so; but, at the contact of her supple form, which moulded itself to his, penetrated by the magnetic warmth radiating from those diabolically seductive limbs, he did not possess the energy to repulse her, even gently, although he mentally conjured Marian to exorcise him from the charm, from the witchery which enveloped him and insinuated itself through the net-work of his veins and through every pore of his skin!

And the Duchess, slowly, in a mournful scale, now enumerated the chapter of her regrets. No: she knew now, he had never loved her except materially, with a passion which possession satisfied, and as he would the first comer, a servant, no matter which one of her chamber-maids, young, pretty, and sweet. Was she mistaken? Let him deny it, then! He had not the audacity, and she pressed him with questions.

Surely she did not believe that he had not had other women before her, peasants, *bourgeoises*, fine ladies, not to say prostitutes, and in the mass of these commonplace conquests, caressed one minute with transport and then quickly forgotten, she counted no longer; it was frightful; it was enough to make one die of grief and shame; she no longer had any greater place in his esteem, in his gratitude, than all those fleeting, doubtful passions at which people sometimes blush.

"Ellen!" protested Richard, feebly, but she did not stop.

"Yes, at which they blush; for often," she continued, "one sees such cases; a young man, beautiful as a heathen god, abandons himself to the equivocal and mercenary embraces of an old and ugly courtesan, worn out by a whole population of lovers by night, by day, within the hour, or he even pursues with his sensual madness some shapeless, dirty wench, spotted with the filth of her revolting trade."

"Ellen!" said Sir Bradwell, anew, with a swelling heart and pressing her against his broad chest with a tenderness not at all concealed.

But the Duchess was not contented with this testimony. In complacently unveiling before Richard the picture of the base and ignominious loves upon which the youthful ardors of beginners feed, she aimed to suggest to his mind comparisons between the lot of others and his own happiness, favored with an admirable mistress, in her triumphant prime, surrounded by the most fervent adoration of all who came near her, and whom he had but to say the word in order to possess alone.

Since Marian escaped him, Marian the virgin, at least he might conceive, on hearing this account of the clandestine couplings of the common herd, a dread of being given up to such himself if he did not cling to the Duchess, and this apprehension strengthened Lady Ellen as the beginning of a future and firm constancy on the part of the lover who had just given signs of releasing himself from her charming and golden bonds.

She resumed her instructive discourse.

"Pardon!" said he, at last slipping his arm around her flexible form, the intoxicating velvet of which his fingers felt, enraptured, through the material of her wrapper, as they buried themselves in the bend of her prominent and firm hips.

At the same time he again drew the Duchess towards him, the forehead of the young woman at the height of his lips; but was he not then conquered, and did the image of the young Irish girl still float between them? She struggled, refused herself, saying with a faint voice, in which there was an appearance of a sob, Sir Richard held in his arms only the mistress of his body if in the kisses which she received there was no soul.

And, disengaging herself, with averted head, pressing her eyelids as if tears were flowing which she wished to drive back or conceal, she declared that she would not belong to him henceforth unless he loved her first of all for her heart.

Though, up to this time, she had been only the flesh which infatuates, which intoxicates, and upon which one may gorge and surfeit himself, she would not lend herself longer to these vile, degrading embraces, which lowered the highest of women to a level with the lowest, and all to a level with the beasts; and she

Continued on page 6.

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"In abolishing rent and interest, the last vestiges of old-time slavery, the Revolution abolishes at one stroke the sword of the executioner, the seal of the magistrate, the club of the policeman, the gauge of the exciseman, the erasing-knife of the department clerk, all those insignia of Politics, which young Liberty grinds beneath her heel." — PROUDHON.

☞ The appearance in the editorial column of articles over other signatures than the editor's initial indicates that the editor approves their central purpose and general tenor, though he does not hold himself responsible for every phrase or word. But the appearance in other parts of the paper of articles by the same or other writers by no means indicates that he disapproves them in any respect, such disposition of them being governed largely by motives of convenience.

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Father McGlynn.

How funny it all reads, — the "excommunication," cursing McGlynn inside and out! What a string of heavenly celebrities are invoked! Quite new to this generation. But not a terror, it would seem. Nobody's afraid. McGlynn goes on serenely, and the thousands who packed the Opera House in Philadelphia last Sunday night, mostly Catholic, rose *en masse* to cheer him. He was their hero. Why? Because he would not go to Rome. He withstands the pope and defies him; tells the Head of the Church that he has no right to do this and that. Curious. What sort of a Head has the Church got in these modern days that common priests and their flock can say: "O Head, you have no right," etc.? What right have priest or people to say this? Verily, no right as Roman Catholics. Only the poor right of human beings. But *that* they have waived by their membership of a church that does not recognize it, permit it, or have aught to do with it, except to put it down.

"Ah!" the reply comes from these McGlynn "Roman Catholics," "in all matters of *religion* concerning the Church we submit. But not as to our politics in America, or our views on social problems here."

But, alas! for them, the Roman Church knows no such distinction. It is all "religion" with the Roman Church. Could it maintain the power, verily, little else would be left to a world that the Christ is to bring to his feet by means of this his Church, as the Church claims.

But Father McGlynn insists that it is not so, and he is still as good a Roman Catholic as ever.

At the same time both he and Mr. George dwell upon the fact that the great social struggle now begun for the industrial emancipation of the people is pre-eminently a religious one. In all their meetings they sing, "Nearer, my God, to thee," and other religious hymns. You cannot, they affirm, divorce religion from life.

Now, all Pope Leo has done is to say, "Just so, and therefore I propose, as Christ's vicar, to regulate your life, the *whole* of it."

What remains for Father McGlynn?

Simply to fall back upon his own human right to regulate his own life for himself and let the Church go. What he appears to be trying to do is to reduce the Church to a mere salvation-insurance agency for the future world, denying it all prerogative for dealing with the world that now is.

But everybody sees in this age of approaching common sense that the Church, so bereft of function, would become speedily an affair of very little import. No; Pope Leo has no such suicidal vision before his eyes. The Church is political and social. It is quite as much for this world as for any other; yea, *more* so. How *much* more Father McGlynn and his insurgent brethren must learn by experience. And is not the Church consistent? If it can claim divine authority over Father McGlynn's soul, why not also over the body that for the time being holds that soul? How can the Great Shepherd guide the flock into heaven, if he lose sight of it in its most perilous wanderings on earth?

Verily, the Good Shepherd is not so remiss in his duty.

It seems, then, that Father McGlynn must submit wholly, or not at all.

As an American, as a man, let the decision be, "not at all."

Neither to popes nor to kings, far or near, let him submit. His only refuge is in the Sovereignty of the Individual, the individual and supreme control of his own affairs.

H.

Contract or Organism, What's That to Us?

Some very interesting and valuable discussion is going on in the London "Jus" concerning the question of compulsory *versus* voluntary taxation. In the issue of June 17 there is a communication from F. W. Read, in which the following passage occurs:

> The voluntary taxation proposal really means the dissolution of the State into its constituent atoms, and leaving them to recombine in some way or no way, just as it may happen. There would be nothing to prevent the existence of five or six "States" in England, and members of all these "States" might be living in the same house! The proposal is, it appears to me, the outcome of an idea in the minds of those who propound it that the State is, or ought to be, founded on contract, just as a joint-stock company is. It is a similar idea to the defunct "original contract" theory. It was thought the State must rest upon a contract. There had been no contract in historic times; it was therefore assumed that there had been a prehistoric contract. The voluntary taxationist says there never has been any contract; therefore the State has never had any ethical basis; therefore we will now make a contract. The explanation of the whole matter, I believe, is that given by Mr. Wordsworth Donisthorpe, — *viz.*, that the State is a social organism, evolved as every other organism is evolved, and not requiring any more than other organisms to be based upon a contract either original or contemporary.

The idea that the voluntary taxationist objects to the State precisely because it does not rest on contract, and wishes to substitute contract for it, is strictly correct, and I am glad to see (for the first time, if my memory serves me) an opponent grasp it. But Mr. Read obscures his statement by his previous remark that the proposal of voluntary taxation is "the outcome of an idea . . . that the State *is, or* ought to be, founded on contract." This would be true if the words which I have italicized should be omitted. It was the insertion of these words that furnished the writer a basis for his otherwise groundless analogy between the Anarchists and the followers of Rousseau. The latter hold that the State originated in a contract, and that the people of today, though they did not make it, are bound by it. The Anarchists, on the contrary, deny that any such contract was ever made; declare that, had one ever been made, it could not impose a shadow of obligation on those who had no hand in making it; and claim the right to contract for themselves as they please. The position that a man may make his own contracts, far from being analogous to that which makes him subject to contracts made by others, is its direct antithesis.

It is perfectly true that voluntary taxation would not necessarily "prevent the existence of five or six 'States' in England," and that "members of all these 'States' might be living in the same house." But I see no reason for Mr. Read's exclamation point after this remark. What of it? There are many more than five or six Churches in England, and it frequently happens that members of several of them live in the same house. There are many more than five or six insurance companies in England, and it is by no means uncommon for members of the same family to insure their lives and goods against accident or fire in different companies. Does any harm come of it? Why, then, should there not be a considerable number of defensive associations in England, in which people, even members of the same family, might insure their lives and goods against murderers or thieves? Though Mr. Read has grasped one idea of the voluntary taxationists, I fear that he sees another much less clearly, — namely, the idea that defence is a service, like any other service; that it is labor both useful and desired, and therefore an economic commodity subject to the law of supply and demand; that in a free market this commodity would be furnished at the cost of production; that, competition prevailing, patronage would go to those who furnished the best article at the lowest price; that the production and sale of this commodity are now monopolized by the State; that the State, like almost all monopolists, charges exorbitant prices; that, like almost all monopolists, it supplies a worthless, or nearly worthless, article; that, just as the monopolist of a food product often furnishes poison instead of nutriment, so the State takes advantage of its monopoly of defence to furnish invasion instead of protection; that, just as the patrons of the one pay to be poisoned, so the patrons of the other pay to be enslaved; and, finally, that the State exceeds all its fellow-monopolists in the extent of its villainy because it enjoys the unique privilege of compelling all people to buy its product whether they want it or not. If, then, five or six "States" were to hang out their shingles, the people, I fancy, would be able to buy the very best kind of security at a reasonable price. And what is more, — the better their services, the less they would be needed; so that the multiplication of "States" involves the abolition of the State.

All these considerations, however, are disposed of, in Mr. Read's opinion, by his final assertion that "the State is a social organism." He considers this "the explanation of the whole matter." But for the life of me I can see in it nothing but another irrelevant remark. Again I ask: What of it? Suppose the State is an organism, — what then? What is the inference? That the State is therefore permanent? But what is history but a record of the dissolution of organisms and the birth and growth of others to be dissolved in turn? Is the State exempt from this order? If so, why? What proves it? The State an organism? Yes; so is a tiger. But unless I meet him when I haven't my gun, his organism will speedily disorganize. The State is a tiger seeking to devour the people, and they must either kill or cripple it. Their own safety depends upon it. But Mr. Read says it can't be done. "By no possibility can the power of the State be restrained." This must be very disappointing to Mr. Donisthorpe and "Jus," who are working to restrain it. If Mr. Read is right, their occupation is gone. Is he right? Unless he can demonstrate it, the voluntary taxationists and the Anarchists will continue their work, cheered by the belief that the compulsory and invasive State is doomed to die.

T.

Gronlund, George, and Proudhon.

Laurence Gronlund's pamphlet on the "Insufficiency of Henry George's Theory," written, I presume, to secure the ascendency of the State Socialists over the followers of George in the councils of the United Labor Party, is for the most part keen and strong. He effectually disposes of George's weak justification of interest, his absurd inverse ratio between rent and interest, his confused use of the word value, his poetical but utterly uneconomic dream that the nation can live in luxury on the proceeds of a single tax on land, his short-sighted expectation that an increase in wages will follow the abolition of the land monopoly though the monopoly of capital should be untouched (Gronlund shows that such a reform might actually decrease wages), and his erroneous accounting for "over-production" and recurring crises by mere speculation in land.

But, when Gronlund attempts to account for the phenomena last mentioned, he fails as utterly as George. According to Gronlund, they are due to the wage system, competition, and private enterprise. He shows truly enough, as Proudhon showed long before him, that gluts in the market arise because the wages

of labor will not buy back its product. But suppose wages should increase to an equivalence with product. Then there would be no over-production, and still the wage system would be in existence. Not the wage system, therefore, but insufficiency of wages is the proximate cause of over-production. The remoter cause, the reason for this insufficiency, is to be found, not in competition, where Gronlund seeks it, but in its antithesis, monopoly, — monopoly, not simply of land, but, first and most of all, of money. Free money, accompanied or followed by "occupying ownership" of land, will abolish interest, rent, and profits, establish an equality between wages and product, and make overproduction, panics, and enforced idleness impossible.

This was the central idea in Proudhon's economic teaching. Having answered George, why does not Gronlund answer Proudhon? Does he prefer, like George himself, to answer only the weakest of his opponents? Or does he fight shy of Proudhon, remembering his unfortunate experience in trying to answer him seven or eight years ago? At that time Gronlund had just come to Boston from St. Louis under the auspices of W. G. H. Smart, then an active State Socialist. He was put forward by Mr. Smart and his friends in a sort of "See the conquering hero comes" fashion. I was the recipient of one of his first visits. He told me that he had heard of me as the translator of Proudhon, that he had read none of Proudhon's writings, that he knew nothing of his thought, and that he desired to understand him. At his request, therefore, I lent him "What is Property?" I think this occurred on a Wednesday. On the following Saturday an advertisement appeared in the Boston papers, announcing that Mr. Gronlund, on that Saturday evening, would address a certain labor meeting on the subject, "Proudhon, the Quack." This title indicated the summary and confident manner in which he proposed to sweep out of sight the author of fifty volumes after a three days' reading of only one of them. The address itself established two things conclusively, — that he told the truth when he said to me that he knew nothing of Proudhon's thought, and that in his three days' reading he had learned precious little of it. As far as I remember, he said literally nothing that was not an utter misrepresentation of Proudhon's position and arguments. I will give one instance as a sample of the whole. Proudhon devotes a chapter to showing that "property is impossible," explaining that he means by "property" wealth legally privileged with the power of usury, and by "impossible" incapable of permanent existence. In other words, he shows that usury carries within itself the seeds of its own inevitable destruction. Gronlund, with book in hand and opened at this chapter, referred to it substantially in these words: "This man declares that property is impossible. How absurd! Do we not see property before us? Do we not own property? Is it not actually in existence? How ridiculous, then, to claim that property is impossible! What better evidence could be desired that this author is a quack!" Not one word to show the audience what Proudhon meant; not one word to show that he himself knew what he meant. And yet he declared that he had read the book thoroughly.

When he had finished his speech, one of his hearers, who had read Proudhon to some purpose, claimed the floor, and read the following words from the book which Gronlund had criticised: "We discover, singularly enough, that property may indeed manifest itself accidentally; but that, as an institution and principle, it is mathematically impossible. So that the axiom of the school — *ab actu ad posse valet consecutio:* from the actual to the possible the inference is good — is given the lie as far as property is concerned." Of course this passage alone served to turn Gronlund's ridicule back upon himself. After reading other extracts which disposed with equal effectiveness of Gronlund's remaining misrepresentations, the speaker asked the audience which was the quack, — the man of science and learning who had spent a long life in laborious and studious analysis of the most important social problems, or the man who, after three days' examination of a small part of the results of the other's labors, pretended to adequately discuss and summarily condemn them as quackery. The question needed no answer, and the speaker sat down, leaving Gronlund sitting before the audience, as his own patron, Mr. Smart, expressed it afterwards, "in the attitude of a whipped school-boy."

Perhaps the castigation then administered made Gronlund a wiser man. The strength of his criticisms on George would seem to indicate as much. If so, it would be interesting to see him once more try conclusions with the great thinker against whom he was once so eager to enter the lists and whose thought has now ten times the influence in this country that it had then. Discretion, it is true, is said to be the better part of valor, but it may be fairly claimed of the acknowledged leader of the State Socialists of America that he should either demolish the arguments of Anarchism, or else admit that it, rather than State Socialism, is the remedy for the existing social evils.

T.

"To produce wealth in the shape of coal," says Henry George, "nothing is needed but a bed of coal and a man." Yes, one thing else is needed, — a pick-axe. This neglect of the pick-axe and of the means of obtaining it is a vital flaw in Mr. George's economy. It leads him to say that "what hinders the production of wealth is not the lack of money to pay wages with, but the inability of men who are willing to work to obtain access to natural opportunities." That this lack of access, in the proportion that it exists, is a hindrance to production is indisputable, but in this country it is but a molehill in labor's path compared with the mountain that confronts labor in consequence of the lack of money. In fact, the lack of access is largely due to the lack of money.

Powderly wants it to be understood that he is not a candidate for re-election. He probably intends to devote his energies and powers (such as niggardly nature has endowed him with) to the "cause of temperance," which, according to the sentiments expressed by him in Boston lately, turns out to be the only really worthy cause, as intemperance is the root of labor's misery and suffering. Wonder if he ever read the platform of the Knights of Labor, a knowledge and perfect belief in the principles of which he more than once declared essential to being "covered with the shield."

Mr. Bolton Smith of Memphis asks through "John Swinton's Paper" if any one can "seriously maintain that the good of the masses would be consulted by depriving government of its powers as school-teacher, letter-carrier, geologist, agricultural chemist, and the like." Well, Mr. Bolton Smith, I, and not a few others far superior to me in intelligence, have maintained just that for many years, and have managed to keep straight faces most of the time. In fact, we never smile except when we are asked some such question as yours.

Still in the Doleful Dumps.

To the Editor of Liberty:

In your comments on my article on "Theoretical Methods" I am struck with as much amazement as was Dr. Johnson at the volubility of the fishwoman. Dismissing the personalities "theoretically" assumed, — for abuse couched in language suitable to the requirements of Boston Culture rather than of Billingsgate needs no consideration, — I may humbly suggest that it needs no "reader with a penetrating eye" to see that the apparently infinitesimal point in my letter lay in its *assumption* that wind, or preaching, would not abolish entrenched Authority, and, I might have added, has invariably led to overt acts which, though we theoretically deprecate, legitimately result while human nature remains what it is, so far below the plane of your philosophic thought.

The assumption that I oppose the State as now existing rather than the principle upon which it rests, — Authority, — is purely gratuitous. I have stated in the columns of Liberty that I regard at the basis of every dispute in modern history the conflicting principles of Authority and Liberty. That I believe the existing political State in imminent danger of destruction does not demand that I should array myself on its side until the theorist has had time by "addressing himself to such persons as are amenable to reason, to the end that these may unite and here and now enter upon the work of laying the foundations of liberty." At the risk of another attack I still regard this as savoring of Salvation Army tactics. As I stated: "Let the inevitable come as it will, I can protest then as now!"

The distinction made by you that you sought *abolition* and I *reform* had no warrant outside of your fertile imagination. The assumption that, my view of the outlook being granted, there is the more need for constructive work might have point if Liberty were the sole constructor and I its opponent.

Although your reply was longer than the article itself, it did not touch the prominent point that "the constant factor remains, — that the Apostle is only an apostle to the few." Even if the existing State should go down in revolution to be replaced by another State in its stead, I believe that my voice would be equally as potent for constructive work in the discussion that event would engender as at present. And these conclusions I hold in spite of the combined opposition of Mr. Tucker in Boston and Mr. Grinnell in Chicago. To call one "absurd," "unmethodical," a "slave who is so utterly destitute of an idea, so thoroughly incapable of a generalization," etc., have their use in raising a cloud of dust to conceal the combatant's weakness, but are lacking in argumentative force. My letter and your reply present in striking contrast the pessimistic and optimistic view of things. Will Authority wait for passive resistance to concentrate? I doubt it, even at the risk of again being euphemistically called a fool. Still sadly,

DYER D. LUM.

NORTHAMPTON, MASS.

[There was no abuse in my comments on Mr. Lum's article. In the opening sentences I was obliged to characterize the article as a whole in order to explain why I should not undertake to unravel all his blundering entanglements. Having done that, I devoted the rest of my space to solid argument against so much of his position as seemed worthy of any attention. This argument he does not meet. It is true that wind, or preaching, will not abolish Authority. That is why I always objected to the Chicago men's harangues as strongly as to their bombs. Not wind, or preaching, but reason, or teaching, is the only weapon that Authority need fear. This weapon is never needed so much as when wind has precipitated overt acts. Therefore let us forge it in advance; and, even though the overt acts are sure to come, let us discourage and delay them all that we can, in order that we may have the more time to forge. That is Liberty's policy; that is the Anarchistic policy; that is the policy of common sense; that is the policy the wisdom of which Mr. Lum cannot successfully dispute. It is true that Mr. Lum sometimes writes articles in which he squarely attacks Authority and squarely favors Liberty, but I was not answering one of those articles. He generally writes sensibly, but his lapses into nonsense are unhappily so frequent that it is impossible on such occasions to treat him as a man of sense. "The apostle is only an apostle of the few," but each of the few becomes in turn an apostle to a few more, and thus thought ever widens the circle of its influence. The insinuations that I have arrayed myself on the side of the existing political State (if that is the meaning of Mr. Lum's mysterious sentence) and that I have entered into partnership with Lawyer Grinnell were thrown out by Mr. Lum in anger. In his saner moments he knows them to be groundless. — EDITOR LIBERTY.]

Anarchy Defined by Henry George.

As it continually falls upon Liberty to severely criticise Henry George, his ideas, and his policy, it is the more anxious to admit and assert all that can be truthfully admitted and asserted in his favor. It is certainly in his favor that he should be able and willing, in answer to a correspondent, to state with an approximation to fairness the doctrine of the Anarchists. This he did in the "Standard" of July 23 as follows:

The terms "Anarchist," "Communist," and "Socialist" are very liberally used nowadays by people who have not the slightest conception of their meaning. An Anarchist, in the true sense, is not one who believes in or advocates violence. He is an extreme individualist, one who would carry to its uttermost the political doctrine that that government is best which governs least; accordingly he would have no government at all. He would have everyone free to do as he pleases, believing that where this absolute liberty prevailed no one would please to do wrong to another. In India it is said that there is a people who do not punish delinquents by force. If a wrong be done, the fact is ascertained judicially, but no sentence is imposed. The offender, however, becomes an outcast. He is perfectly free. His individualism is preserved. But his fellow men will not associate with him. That is a type of Anarchy. Violent outbreaks against the existing order of things, which are usually attributed to Anarchists, are not the work of Anarchists at all. Anarchists are non-combatants. Liberty of Boston is the organ of Anarchy in this country.

Continued from page 5.

reproached him with having dishonored her by the depravities of a passion without ideal, when, knowing nothing about love, she had aspired, in the delicacies of her nature, to the simple outpouring of souls, to the poetry of hearts in communion.

An excellent actress, she hid her eyes with her little plump hand, reiterating with sighs her bitter and heart-broken censure:

"No, no! Richard, you have not acted like an honest man!"

What became of the griefs of Marian, by the side of these wrongs of Sir Bradwell toward the Duchess, which she pointed out to him in the depths of her grievous affliction? Treor's granddaughter ran only an imaginary peril to her body; at least the uncertain catastrophe hanging over her would not touch her moral being; while in Lady Ellen's case it was her mind, her emotions, her most sacred sentiments that Richard had perverted. Ah! how this crime outweighed the responsibilities assumed in regard to the Irish girl!

And he, in the examination of his conscience, feeling himself culpable, confused by this specious revelation, at once overflowing with immoderate desire, and, impressed with sincere remorse, full of longing and repentance, he sprang towards his tottering mistress, and without suspecting the pretended fainting-fit which she invented to complete her conquest, he covered her with kisses to bring back the sweet breath and pardon on the pale face to revive the enchanting smile.

To be continued.

Shutting Up an Individualist.

[London Today.]

Not long ago I was in a third class carriage on the Metropolitan Railway, returning from a debate on Socialism at the Hall of Science. An elderly man, snugly swathed in several overcoats and comforters, entered the compartment and sat down opposite me. He was an odiously comfortable, self-satisfied man,—one who obviously wrapped up too much, loved a juicy steak with onions, took his glass of toddy with relish, and was perfectly content with society whilst it enabled him to continue so indulging himself. All this, I need not say, made him offensive in the highest degree to me, who am a vegetarian, a teetotaller, a contemner of top coats, and a socialist. He planted his umbrella cheerfully upon my toes, and immediately apologized. I concealed as well as I could the detestation with which he inspired me, and politely assured him that it did not matter.

"I see you at the 'Awl of Science jes' now," he said.

"Sir," I replied, distantly,—for I really could not stand his beginning to talk to me: "I have been at the Hall of Science."

"Yes," he said: "don't I tell you I see you there. I think them Socialists wont go there in a hurry again after the shewin' up they've 'ad. Now, 'ow can men be such idjits?"

"The Socialists," I retorted warmly, "are noble-hearted men; and if you really suppose that the futile evasions and contemptible quibblings of their opponents can for a moment discourage them, you evidently don't understand Socialism."

"No more I don't," he said, with exasperating complacency.

"Well, sir; and whose fault is that, may I ask?"

He answered, in one word, "Theirn."

"Certainly not," I said. "On the contrary, yourn, sir, yourn; emphatically yourn."

"Not a bit on it. Fur wot am I? A honest inquirer, that's wot I am. Wen Socialism come up four year ago, I sez, 'wot is it?' and I couldn't get a straight answer to that nowhere. Then I asked: 'Is Bredlor again' it?' and I found straight enough that he 'wor again' it. I knowed Bredlor for many a year; and I knowed that, if there were any sense in a thing, he wor the man to find it out. I went to hear 'Yndman debate it with Bredlor; and—"

"Mr. Bradlaugh was confuted, silenced, exposed, smashed, and annihilated in that debate," I said, interrupting him defiantly.

"He recovered from it with a snddenness su'prisin' in a man of his years," observed my fellow-traveller, with a calm which made me loathe him. "I do not deny that 'Yndman said many true things; but wen Bredlor put to him the questions wich arose in my mind,—that's wy I believe in Bredlor: he brings out wot I want to 'ave brought out,—no satisfactory answer come. 'Yndman spoke disrespectful wen he compared civ'lization to a wooden 'am; and, wen it were put straight to him what would become of a little house property, such as I have down in Clerkenwell, he as good as said that it would be twisted from me and gev to the rag, tag, and bobtail. Hows'ever, we all thought there was summat in the Federation then. I b'lieved they were twenty thousand strong; and the thing was new; and they had an air about them."

"They had in their ranks men of the first distinction," I said, "and they had at least a hundred thousand members. Now, though only four years have elapsed, the numbers are quintupled; and three or four other societies, equally numerous, are in the field beside them."

"And all so busy, too, that not more nor a hundred-and-fifty or so ever has time to come to a meeting. No: they're bust up,—hexploded. There never was nothink in it from the very fust. There was Morris the poet: he wrote nothink under thirteen bob a book; and so none of hus knew much about 'im until he blew on the fraternity business by starting another Socialism shop in competition with 'Yndman. Then there was Bax, wot looked twice as like a poet as Morris: he went with him. I went to hear Bax explain Socialism once. He's a clever un: not a doubt of that,—powerful clever,—too clever for them as picks up their eddication anyhow. I listened to him for a hour; and not a blessed word did I unnerstand. He wanted to make hout that, if I believed in takin' honest interest for my money, my hidears wouldn't 'old their contents, like as if my hidears was jugs. Bax aint wot I call a man of business. Then there's the Fabians, a sort of genteel Socialists that invites the hothers to come and lecture to 'em, and then sets on 'em to pull 'em to pieces. What's their opinions, I should like to know? And how many of them is there? And who are they?"

"Their opinions are socialistic," I replied. "As to how many there are, I should say about two hundred thousand, including the branches."

"They all fits into Willis's Rooms, and no great packing neither," he said.

"Every member is not present at each meeting," I retorted. "And as to who they are, I cannot enumerate so vast a body. But on the executive they have Mr. Hubert Bland—"

"I see him in the cheer at their meetings," he interposed. "A hoverbearing gent with a heye-glass and—"

"Mr. Bland is my particular friend," I said hotly; "and I request you not to—"

"No offence: no offence," he said, with unimpaired good humor. "There is 'im and Mrs. Besant, she's a Malthusian: and I hear Fielding and Burrows and 'Yndman often pint hout that Socialism and Malthusianism is dead again' one another. Then there's Webb, wot writes particles shewing what benefactors millionaires is; and Holiviar, wot Champion calls the harm-cheer socialist; and Podmore, wot is in a ghost-catchin' business down in Dean's Yard: and Barnard Shorr, wot noone regards as serious."

"Sir," I said, "I have the highest opinion of Mr. Bernard Shaw; and I decline to listen to the slightest disparagement of him."

"Then I would rec'mend you to keep his company hexclusively. But I mean no offence." (Here, to my secret disgust, he insisted on shaking hands with me.) "I will name no further names: but I say there is the hithe of conceit in them Fabians; and noone can't tell what they're driving at anymore than the hothers. Some of 'em is that bloodthirsty that quiet people are frightened to jine 'em. Hothers is not proper Socialists at all. Some is all for Parliament and law-abidingness: more is for layin' 'old of heverything, and doing away with government. Between 'em all, nobody can make out Socialism, though heverybody asks about it."

"Stuff!" I said, contemptuously.

"Well, come," he remonstrated. "You say you're one of 'em. Wot is Socialism, now, yourself?"

Though I had been for years an ardent Socialist, this question had never occurred to me; and I was, I own, unprepared to answer it. I looked as profound as I could, and began, "It is a difficult matter to explain."

"Don't I tell you so?" he said persuasively. "And if you was to hexplain it, and me to trouble myself to take it in, the very next Socialist I met would tell me that you didn't know nothink about it. What society might you belong to, Mister?"

"I am a Fabian," I replied with enthusiasm, producing a sheaf of tracts. "Allow me to present you with a little literature which will perhaps clear up—"

"No," he said, gently but firmly repulsing my offering, "I've read 'em all. Them as is not meant as gammon is himproving; but they don't bring the main pint 'ome to me. Besides, how am I to know whether the Fabians is right or no. 'Yndman, I'm told, laughs ready to split wen the Fabians is named. Morris don't say nothink about 'em; but p'raps he thinks the more; for it stands to reason that, if he thought much of 'em, he'd jine 'em. None of 'em seems to know rightly where they differ, or whether they differ or not. That shows that they don't know their own mind. It's dreaming: that's what it is. Mere Hutopian dreaming,—fancying that human natur' is going to be different."

"So it is," I hissed at him. "So it is."

"Wot!" he said. "No more selfishness? no more cheatin'? no more higuorance and disease and crime?"

"Certainly not," I replied. "Under Socialism, men will feel that each lives for all and all for each."

"Especially hall for heach," he remarked.

"Not especially all for each," I exclaimed. "Quite the contrary. Again, under Socialism, perfect sanitary arrangements will put an end to disease; and life will be indefinitely prolonged. Compulsory State education will render ignorance impossible. There will be no conceivable motive for crime where all are free and fearless."

"Jealousy, for instance?" he suggested.

"There will be community of wives, and therefore no jealousy," I said.

"S'pose the wives objects," he persisted.

"In a state of socialistic enlightenment they will know better than to object, sir."

"Let's 'ope so," he said, evidently unconvinced. "Let's 'ope so. You aint married, I see."

"What do you mean by that remark, sir?" I cried, now fairly heated. "What right have you to rush to conclusions concerning a perfect stranger? I am of marriageable age; and I am not labelled as a single man. You cannot see, as you insufferably pretend, that I am unmarried. You have only guessed it. It happens that I disapprove of marriage on principle; but I will not allow you or any man to insinuate that my condition can be inferred from my personal appearance."

"Not from your pus'nal appearance, but from your views concerning the henlight'nin' effect of Socialism on wives," he said placably. "But I meant no offence,—none at all." (Here, fearing that he was about to proffer another handshake, I thrust my fists into my pockets and glared at him.) "Do you find that Socialism sweetens your tempers among yourselves, now, if I may make bold to ask?"

"It does so in the highest degree," I replied. "It shews us that we are brothers and equals; and so it is impossible for us to cherish bitter feelings towards one another. Illtemper is merely a phase of the system."

"Meanin' the bodily system,—the constitootion, as it were?" he inquired.

"No, sir: the accursed capitalistic system, under which the worker is ground down by a brutal competi—"

"Yes," he said hastily, "I know all about that."

"*Do* you?" I sneered, my rage growing upon me.

"I've heerd it pretty often," he said. "Touchin' competition, some Socialists sez they're quite agreeable to it,—that they depend on it to keep things straight under Socialism. Hows'ever, we wont say more about your little differences, as I shall be getting out presently, and am willing to part friends with you. But, concerning your tempers, I would put it to you that for downright abuse and bad language to them as differs from you, your papers beat anything I ever see in print. And—"

"It is false," I cried. "We protest against tyranny; but we never condescend to mere vituperation. Why, you disgraceful old scallawag" (I was now getting almost angry), "do you suppose that we will suffer you and your like to dictate to the workers what language they shall use? I know what you want. Class legislation, class education,—"

"No I don't," he said, edging away towards the door, and looking a little pale. "I never—"

"Oh yes you did," I shouted. "What were you saying just now? You are one of those that would grind the last farthing of surplus value out of the rickety bones of a starving child. I know your sort. But there is a day coming; and I advise you to tremble,—aye, and to look sharp about it; for the day is nearer than you think. There are forty-two millions of Socialists in England already."

Here the train stopped: and he got out quickly, shut the door, and grinned at me through the window.

"Aye," I continued, "you may grin; but take care you don't find your head grinning some day on the spike of one of the railings of the new Temple of Humanity."

"I'll see you in a gaol first," he said; "you and the rest of your forty-two millions. You'll fit in a small one. Why can't you learn to tell the truth? D'ye take me for one of the poor fools you talk down to in Trafalgar Square, when you 'aven't the sense to remember that all Hingland, for once in a way, will read your speeches next day, and judge of you according."

I rushed to the window and thrust out my head as far as I could as the guard called to him to stand back: "You dare to call the people fools," I shrieked, as the train moved off. "Remember 1789. Beware of 1889. Beware of the guillo—" Here my head came into contact with the railway arch; and for some seconds I was not quite sure that I was not myself decapitated. But, even if I had, it would have been very little consolation to him after the setting down I had given him. I advise every workman who finds himself attacked by some foul-mouthed friend of the exploiters to throw off all craven fears, and speak out boldly, as I did. We can make these people afraid if we shew them a determined front, and convince them that we are no longer deceived by their phrases. That done, they will fly before us as they fled from Marseilles before the cholera, and from Nice before the earthquakes; and the future is ours. We will then find out what Socialism is from experience, which is, after all, the only trustworthy teacher. *Vive la Revolution Sociale!*

REDBARN WASH.

A Final Statement.

To the Editor of Liberty:

I suppose I owe the readers of Liberty an apology for continuing to occupy space in discussing a subject in regard to which I am told "everybody" thinks me in the wrong. Well, "everybody" will soon have a chance to read something else, as, whatever may be the result of the present letter, it will be my last.

I must congratulate Tak Kak on the ingenuity he has displayed in discussing the obligation of promises. He construes my statement that promises must, in order that society be preserved, have a binding effect, to mean that without definite promises we are without any obligations toward each other, and valiantly combats this doctrine. I do not think that even "everybody" will need to be told that I hold no such opinions as are attributed to me, and that, on the contrary, they are (or were) Tak Kak's own. It was to him and not to me that you replied, Mr. Editor, in the matter of its being proper to kill the Chinese because we had made no agreement with them. What I contend is that it is impossible to base a society upon contract unless we consider a contract as having some binding effect, and that the binding effect of a particular contract can not be due to the contract itself. That is to say, no special obligations could be created for us by a contract unless we were under some general obligations towards each other already, one of these being the keeping of faith. I have no doubt whatever that with the further advance of society the *rôle* of formal promises or contracts will be reduced, and this for two reasons. On the one hand, the greater steadiness and evenness of business will not necessitate so many special contracts to promote security; and, on the other hand, what you have called the implied contracts, and what I call the general moral law, will be more widely observed.

Tak Kak claims that right and wrong are individual notions. This is true in the same sense that all our physical conceptions are individual notions. But in this latter case, though our individual notions may differ ever so widely, we are not led to deny the objective reality of the things they represent, and to assert that one may hold one opinion just as well as another. A sangrado, who holds, when his patient dies from bloodletting and starvation, that the true cause is that the blood was not drawn freely enough and not enough water given for nourishment, is just as much entitled to his opinion as the most learned physician; and the "economist" who, when exchange stagnates, upholds the rightfulness of usury and declares the societary sickness to be due to the smallness of the rate of profit has as much right to express his ideas as the most ardent Socialist. The facts remain, however, that over-bloodletting means death to the individual, and usury societary disease. I believe, therefore, that, while the individual is, and must ever be, for himself the arbiter of right and wrong, these latter exist independently of him, and that moral progress consists in the approximation of the various individual conceptions (and, following these, of actions) to conformity with the objective reality. As I look at it, men have not to create justice, but merely to discover what justice is and live in accordance therewith. To me it is as certain that there is a science of justice as that there is a science of optics.

Since the word obligation raises such a storm, and I have used it so often, I ought, perhaps, to explain it. I use the term because I know of none other that expresses the idea; and I fail to see any reason why any one who repudiates the notion of free-will, as I do, should object to it. Everything I do I do because I am *obliged* to,—because the stronger forces in me at that time make that way. If my ideas and feelings were mere "furniture" for my *ego*, of course it would be different; but I know of no *ego* other than the combined ideas and feelings at any given time. A promise to do anything, then, obliges me, simply by bringing forces to bear that would not have come into play if the promise had not been made; obliges me, in other words, because the *me* after the promise is not the same as before it.

Tak Kak's attempt to reconcile Proudhon and Stirner is so weak that it might be sufficient to ask in reply why any young man should even be given a chance to show himself. As an admirer of Proudhon's, however, I feel called upon to resent an attempt to cast what I regard as a stain upon his memory. Now, Stirner expressly attacked Proudhon, and, though Proudhon did not reply to him especially, so far as I am aware,—probably he did not know of him,—he replied most energetically to Stirnerism in "De la Justice." From that work I take the following passages:

> What is, in fact, this Justice, if not the sovereign essence that Humanity has throughout all time adored under the name of *God*, that philosophy in turn has never ceased to seek under diverse names, the *Idea* of Plato and Hegel, the *Absolute* of Fichte, the *pure Reason* and *practical Reason* of Kant, the *Rights of man and of the citizen* of the Revolution? Has not human thought, religious and philosophical, since the beginning of the world, constantly turned on this pivot?
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Justice is everything at once, for reasonable beings, principle and form of thought, guarantee of judgment, rule of conduct, aim of knowledge, and end of existence. It is sentiment and notion, manifestation and law, idea and fact; it is life, mind, universal reason. As in nature, according to the expression of an ancient writer, all concurs, conspires, and consents,—as, in a word, everything in the world tends to harmony and equilibrium,—so in society everything is subordinated to Justice, everything serves it, everything is done at its command, according to its measure, in view of it; it is on it that is built the edifice of interests, and, to this end, that of knowledge: while it, itself, is subordinated to nothing, recognizes no authority outside of itself, serves as instrument to no power, not even to liberty. It is, of all our ideas, the most continuously with us, the most fecund; the only one of our sentiments that men honor without reserve, and the most indestructible of them all. The ignorant man perceives it as fully as the *savant*, and, to defend it, becomes in an instant as subtile as the doctors, as brave as a hero. Before the splendor of right mathematical certitude pales. Therefore is the building up of Justice the greatest business of the human race, the most magistral of the sciences, the work of the collective spontaneity rather than of the genius of legislators, and it will never have an end.
>
> This is why, O People, Justice is severe and suffers no raillery. Every knee bends before it, and every head inclines. It alone permits, tolerates, hinders, or authorizes: it would cease to be, had it need, on the part of any one whatever, of permission, or authorization, or tolerance. All hindrance to it is an outrage, and every man is bound to arm himself to vanquish it. Very different is religion, which has been able to prolong its life only by becoming tolerant, which, in fact, exists only through tolerance. This is enough to say that its *rôle* is finished. Justice, on the contrary, imposes itself and unconditionally; it suffers nothing contrary to itself: it admits no rivalry, either in conscience or in mind; and whosoever sacrifices it, were it even to Thought or to Love, shuts himself out of human society. No truce with iniquity, O democrats: let this be your peace-device and your war-cry. — *Tome I*, pp. 41–43.

Justice, as described in the last two paragraphs cited, is exactly that Truth which Stirner describes as having overthrown God and which must now itself be overthrown, because it imposes itself and is not owned.

> After the inorganic and legendary period of which I spoke in the preceding chapter, a primal legislation was given to consecrate slavery and the distinction of castes: this was the *law of egoism* of which Moses will immediately furnish us an example.
>
> The *lex of love*, expressed by the Gospel, came afterwards, antithesis to the law of egoism, and supposing a third term, as synthesis or balance, which can be only the law of JUSTICE. — *Tome II*, p. 282.
>
> Such was the law of egoism according to which a man, making of another man his servant, his organ, attributed to himself by human and divine authority all that the other man was capable of producing, leaving him, like a beast of burden, only what was necessary for his subsistence.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> We shall see now how this reconstitution took place, how the law of egoism came to an end and was replaced by another less rude, which, without realizing Justice, always in the state of utopia, nevertheless served as a pathway to it. — *Tome II*, pp. 293–4.
>
> Like all neophytes, before being admitted to the light, I had to reply to the three usual questions:
> What does man owe to his fellows?
> What does he owe to his country?
> What does he owe to God?
> To the first two questions, my reply was very nearly as might have been expected; to the third I replied by the word: WAR.
> Justice to all men,
> Devotion to one's country,
> War to God,—that is, to the Absolute,—
> Such was my profession of faith. — *Tome II*, p. 309.
>
> Justice is higher than the affection which attaches us to father, mother, wife, child, or comrade. It does not prevent our loving them; but it makes us love them in another manner, with regard to humanity. It is for this that Justice was made God, and that he who has renounced God continues to adore Justice, even though it be nothing else than the commandment of himself to himself, the principle and law of social dignity.
>
> From all that precedes it follows—and this is a point on which I cannot insist too strongly, since it is the foundation of human morals—that Justice does not reduce to the simple notion of a relation declared by pure reason to be necessary to social order, but that it is also the product of a faculty or function which has for its object the realization of this relation, and which comes into play as soon as man finds himself in the presence of man. — *Tome III*, p. 150.

These passages are stronger than I would write, and they conclusively settle Proudhon's position. I do not expect nor wish that any one will adopt these opinions simply because they are Proudhon's; but the knowledge that an able thinker like Proudhon held certain definite opinions in regard to a subject which he had deeply studied ought to be sufficient to cause any one to bethink him before committing himself to contradictory ideas.

It has not been explained to me yet how, if Tak Kak's ideas are right, there can be any other wrongs than errors of judgment. Tak Kak, in fact, declared in one of his earlier letters that he could not recognize wrong except as imprudence; and yet now he draws a line between mistakes in judgment and errors as to purpose. If I were only anxious for an argumentative victory, I might claim this as an acknowledgment of my position; but what follows it is so confused that I refrain from doing so. Tak Kak says: "It will have morality to be 'truly' good conduct, and, if an individual is so organized that what is for his good is not for the good of the supreme spook of morality, he is not allowed in thought to be a standard of good for himself." This is a complete mis-statement. So long as he confines himself to thought, however improper his ideas may be, morality has no concern with him, beyond pointing out that action in accordance with such ideas would cause wrong to others; but when this being, organized so that his "good" leads him to commit actions injurious to others, actually commits them, morality has commands to utter, commands growing more and more positive with the advance of society. Persons so organized must either learn to control their anti-social impulses, or they will inevitably be weeded out, until only those are left the pursuit of whose individual "good" does not interfere with the like pursuit on the part of others.

Tak Kak says now that a man would not sell his friends, but the essence of his and Stirner's teaching hitherto has been that one has no friends,—all is only property. Friendship implies equality, the recognition of others as like one's self, while, according to Stirner, the ego is alone, surrounded only by *things* which it is for him to use to his best advantage. I do not think that any one who looks on his friends merely as things from which profit is to be extracted will hesitate about selling them.

I will now step aside, Mr. Editor, and await the glorious results promised as the result of the crusade against morality,—the outburst of enthusiasm and generosity to spring from the preaching of the gospel of selfishness. (By the way, why not use the plain term selfishness instead of egoism?)

JOHN F. KELLY.

JULY 3, 1887.

Note.—The italics in the extracts from Proudhon are his.

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The Obscenity Spook.

[Winsted Press.]

The Boston "Investigator" says: "On no account would we defend obscenity in any one." There is the point wherein we differ from the "Investigator" and many others who are with us in defence of Mrs. Slenker and other victims of Comstock and the obscenity laws. What is there so very terrible about obscenity? Did it ever pick anybody's pocket or break anybody's leg? Never. We do not believe it ever did any positive injury to man, woman, or child, yet one might think it a veritable devouring monster, spike-tailed and split-footed, judging by the aspect of horror put on at the thought of it by some men who are quite bold in the facing of other mythological demons.

We say that is is no worse to swear by the realities of nature as exemplified in the human body than to swear by a holy ghost. One is obscenity, the other profanity, and both may be vulgarity; but we believe that a man has as much right to be vulgar as he has to be vain or foolish or to wear a white hat. We are not to be frightened by names into utter forgetfulness of the principles on which human liberty rests and always must rest.

Let the sisters and the cousins and the aunts utter their feminine squeal when a man says "damn it." It is not best to stop and explain that the man didn't mean to say damn it, and that profanity is a dreadful, dreadful sin, on no account to be defended in any one. Yet this is precisely what many are doing in this matter of obscenity. They hear the feminine squeal, they think they see a bugbear coming in the clouds, and they reverently cross themselves and put on a very saintly face, as if something had happened, or was about to happen, to shake the foundations of the universe, and they must look out how they are caught sympathizing with it or with those connected with it.

As long as men of solid understanding and sound sense strike this attitude whenever the mad dog cry of obscenity is raised, such victims as Elmina D. Slenker will suffer outrage at the hands of the mob and by the law that is made for the mob. As long as this attitude was preserved towards blasphemy, Abner Kneeland and his kin were never safe from arrest. Not till men ceased to treat blasphemy as a serious offence deserving punishment; not till they sneered it down and scouted it as anything more than a venial offence against the canons of good taste; not till they asserted their right to blaspheme,—did the blasphemy laws cease to be a menace to free thought and free speech. So with obscenity laws. They will remain to pester the lives of reformers and thinkers and throttle the truth as long as men who ought to know better mince and maunder over it, and concede that obscenity is indeed a very grave and grievous crime.

No man is afraid that his own morality will suffer from any amount of exposure to obscene literature. But his neighbor, his beloved neighbor, for whom he goes to church, and joins the temperance society, and plays the hypocrite generally,—he must preserve his neighbor. It is astonishing how devoted some people are to the moral well-being of—their neighbor; and how careless they are in exposing themselves to the contaminations of vice, to save their neighbor!

Now, this sort of humbug in the name of propriety and purity has gone on long enough. It is time that clear-thinking men ceased to be frightened by the cry of obscenity and refused to admit the necessity or justice of treating obscenity as a crime. This will after a while kill the law as the kindred law against blasphemy was killed. Any treatment of the subject in a way to simply excuse this person or that one on the ground of good intentions, or false accusations, or what not, will effect little for reform.

The natural right of any man or woman to write or print obscene language and send it or receive it through the mails should be maintained. The treatment of such an act as a crime should be denounced. The law of public opinion is sufficient protection against private annoyance or flagrant wrong.

There is no consistent middle ground. If obscenity is a hideous crime, then the law is a righteous one and should be enforced on all alike. If, as we contend, obscenity is only an offence against good taste and the customs of refined people,—a vulgarity,—then the government should cease meddling with it and punishing people for it as if it were a crime.

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